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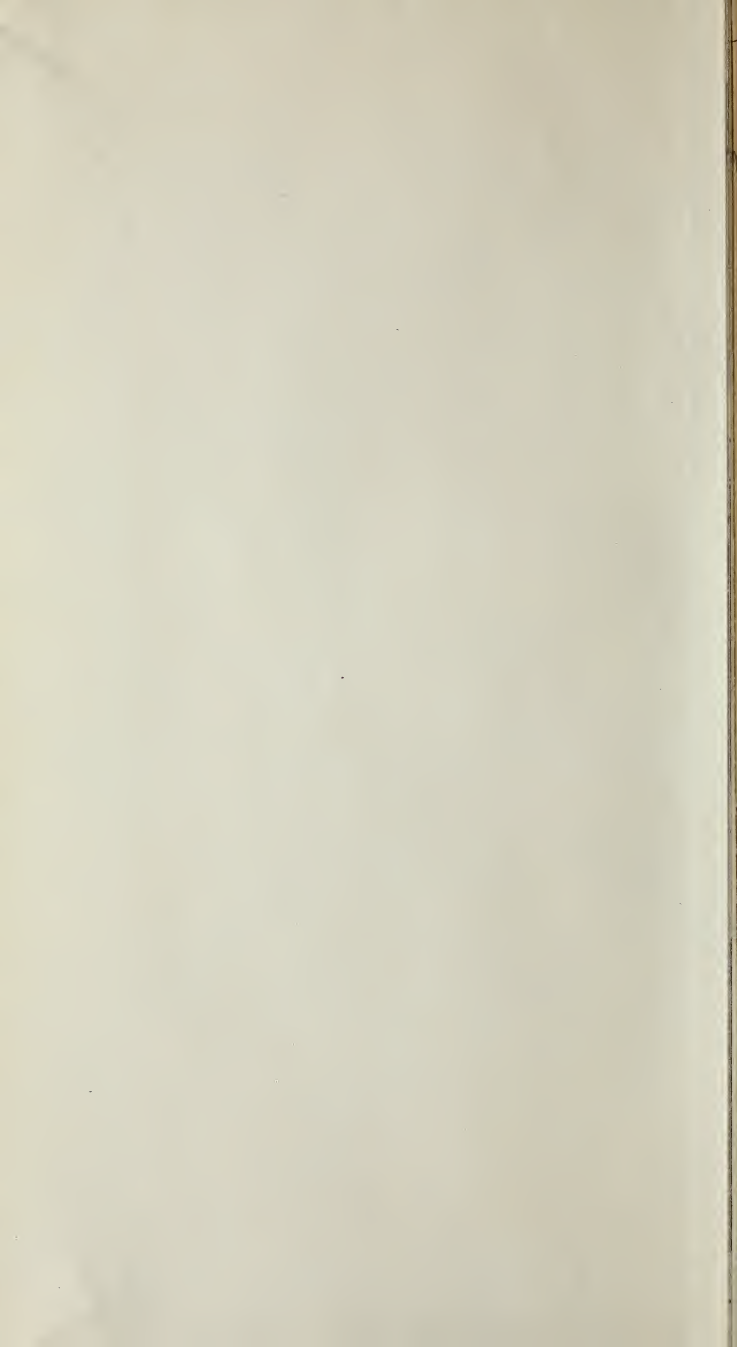
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HISTORY

OF THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

IN

MERCERSBURG, PENNA.

BY

THOMAS CREIGH.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

DEC 1886

MERCERSBURG:

ANDREW M. SPANGLER.

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PREFACE. *As the*

P R E F A C E.

Arthur

THE author of this History of the Church of which he is Pastor, in consenting to its publication, yields to the wishes of his friends. Its origin was as follows. It was deemed expedient to remodel and improve the Church edifice in town, in consequence of which Divine worship was suspended in it for several months. On its being re-occupied—as a subject suitable for the occasion—it was thought that a history of the Lord's dealings with us as a Church and Congregation, would be appropriate. In this opinion, he is happy to learn, that he was not mistaken. And now if the perusal of it will impart any instruction, or afford any gratification, or excite more gratitude to the King and Head of Zion, he will consider his labours abundantly rewarded.

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HISTORY
OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN MERCERSBURG, PENNA.

PERIOD I.

FROM THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH, A. D., 1738, TO
THE SETTLEMENT OF THE REV'D. JOHN KING, D. D., AS
PASTOR, A. D., 1769.

INTRODUCTION. Settlement of the Country. Organization of the Church.
Its extent. Location of the Church edifice. Religious controversy.
Origin of Lower West Conococheague Church. The Rev. John Steele.
Settlement broken up, and the Congregation dispersed. Mr. Steele's
removal. Re-organization. Supplies. The Country again disturbed.
Attachment to the Church. The Session.

"To remember the days of old, and to consider the years
of former generations," is both interesting and profitable.
Lessons of wisdom and prudence may be learned from the
past, which cannot be acquired in any other way. And he
who rescues from oblivion a single fact, which may be use-
ful to his fellow-men, or which will make a salutary impres-
sion upon the mind, should be considered as not having lived
in vain.

It is a matter of sincere and deep regret that the History

justified state, before our religious services can be well pleasing or acceptable to God, was very little understood or thought of; but the common notion seemed to be that if people were aiming to be in the way of duty as well as they could, as they imagined, there was no reason to be much afraid." "In consequence of this ignorance of the nature of practical religion, there were," he adds, "great carelessness and indifference about the things of eternity; great coldness and unconcern in public worship; a disregard of the Sabbath, and prevalence of worldly amusements and follies."

About the year 1730, however, a visible change for the better, began to take place. God from on high, poured out upon some of the Churches the influences of his spirit; and the work thus begun, did not cease, until its influence was felt more or less in all the American churches. But while the Son of Man was sowing wheat, the evil one was sowing tares. Many things took place in connection with this work, of a very questionable character. Good men and wise men differed in regard to it. And so far separated did they become from one another in opinion and feeling; and so tenacious were they of their own peculiar views, that they became divided into two parties. The friends of the revival, were styled *New-side-men*, or *New-lights*: while the others were denominated *Old-side-men*, or *Old-lights*. "These parties thus arrayed, in the progress of collision, became more excited and ardent. Animosities which had long been burning in secret, now burst into a flame. Old-side-men, under the influence of prejudice, regarded their opponents as a body of extravagant and ignorant enthusiasts; while the New-side, under an equally strong prejudice, regarded the Old-side-men as a set of pharisaical formalists. Undue warmth of feeling and speech, and improper inferences were admitted on both sides. And one act of violence led to another, until, at length, in the year 1741, the highest judicatory of the Church was rent asunder: and the synod of

New York, composed of the New-side-men, was set up in a sort of opposition to that of Philadelphia." But although thus divided, "it appears," remarks Dr. Hodge, "that this great schism was not the result of conflicting views, either as to doctrine or church government. It was the result of alienation of feeling produced by the controversies relating to the revival." The effects of this state of things in the church at large, were felt here also. A division was the consequence. This occurred in 1741. Hence originated the congregation of "Lower West Conococheague," or what is now called "Welsh Run." But though a division took place, it was what their situation as a Congregation required, it being much too extensive to allow frequent meetings in one place. And when effected, it was done with so much Christian spirit, that both Churches still adhering to the same Presbytery, were frequently represented in this judicatory by the same commissioner.

In the year 1754, this Church invited the Reverend *John Steele* to become its Pastor. Mr. Steele having accepted the invitation, continued among them for about two years, having charge also of "East Conococheague." He settled at a time when the neighbourhood was greatly disturbed by the Indians. General Braddock had been defeated; and the Indians gathering fresh courage from this disaster, hastened to wreak their vengeance on the inhabitants of these, then frontiers. It was about this time that Col. James Smith, Mr. John McCollough, and Richard Bard, Esq., and wife, were taken captive by them—all of whom were connected with this congregation—the latter two after their captivity; and whose thrilling narratives, as recorded in a book some short time since published, called "Incidents of Border Life," will give you some idea of the exposures and hardships and sufferings of the inhabitants of this region at this early period. In consequence of these frequent attacks of the Indians, the settlement was entirely broken up; the Congregation was dispersed; and Mr. Steele having received an invitation from

the Church in Carlisle to become their Pastor, accepted the invitation, and there lived and laboured the remainder of his days. Mr. Steele was a man of great intrepidity of character. Often did he lead forth companies of armed men to repel the invading savages. He was a good preacher, and a sound divine. But his labours here were too short, and the country too much disturbed, to have been as greatly or as extensively useful, as he would have been under more favourable circumstances. How different is our condition from theirs! *Theirs* was one of toil and great exposure to danger—*ours* is one of comparative ease and safety. With *them*, it was a common thing to meet together to worship God with their fire-arms in their hands, and their swords at their sides—to *us*, belongs the high privilege of meeting in the House of God without fear, and of worshipping without molestation. The ancient Church was enclosed by a *Fortification*, erected for the safety and protection of the surrounding neighbourhood;—fit emblem of that safer, securer refuge which God has provided in his Son, for the penitent believer, from the storms of Divine wrath, and from the enemies of his soul.

After the return of the people to their desolated habitations, they again organized themselves into a Congregation; and enjoyed supplies from the Donegal Presbytery,—until in the years 1762 and '63, when the settlement was again disturbed by the irruption of the Indians, which had once more, well-nigh broken up the Congregation. Yet, though few in number and labouring under great difficulties, they still clung to the Church. And though it had scarcely an existence, yet did it still *live* to administer consolation to them in their trying circumstances. They seem to have identified themselves so completely with the Church, from their first settlement in these parts, that they could not live without it. They seem to have felt the truth of the promise, “they shall prosper that love thee.” Hence when driven from their homes and from the House of God, they seem to have pos-

sessed the spirit of the Psalmist, as, when under somewhat similar circumstances, he laments ; "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God : when shall I come and appear before God ? My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say, Where is thy God ? When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me : for I had gone with the multitude : I went with them to the House of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy day."—Psalm xlii. 1-4. Thus, were they called to pass through many changes and trials, until in 1767, we find the Church in a more prosperous condition than it had been at any former period. The following persons at this time composed the Session : Messrs. William Maxwell, William Smith, John McDowell, William McDowell, John Welsh, Alexander White, John McClelland, Jonathan Smith, William Campbell, Robert Fleming, and Samuel Templeton.

PERIOD II.

FROM THE SETTLEMENT OF THE REVEREND JOHN KING, D. D.
AS PASTOR, A. D. 1769, TO THE SETTLEMENT OF THE
REVEREND DAVID ELLIOTT, D. D. AS PASTOR, A. D. 1812.

Dr. King becomes Pastor. The War of Independence. The Church bears its part in the struggle. The Session. Mercersburg laid out. Church edifice erected in town. The Session. Dr. King resigns his charge. Result of labours. His life and character.

The Church having been thus brought into a more prosperous condition, and its members feeling the importance of having a settled ministry among them, in 1768 invited the Rev'd *John King*, then a Licentiate under the care of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, to preach to them with this view. Mr. King having accepted the invitation, and having laboured among them with great acceptance for several months, was at length ordained and installed Pastor, August 30th, 1769. At the time of his settlement the Congregation numbered one hundred and thirty families.

It was about this time that the nation began to be agitated, from one extreme of it to the other, on the subject of its connection with Great Britain. The fires which had long been concealed, were now beginning to give evidence of their existence. Great Britain had become more and more unyielding in her claims and unrelenting: and the American Colonies had become more determined than ever to maintain their rights, and to defend them at all hazards. From these positions, neither party would recede. The breach had become too wide to be healed. The crisis had been reached—and the Country was in arms. The same spirit which pervaded the Colonies at large, pervaded also the minds of

the people here. The feelings of patriotism had been enkindled in their bosoms, and were to know no abatement in their ardour, until they had achieved their Country's independence. In producing this spirit and in fostering it, Dr. King was second to none of the Presbyterian Clergymen of his day. And such was its deep hold upon the Congregation, that it contributed its full proportion of men and officers to advocate our cause and to defend our rights. I have no means of ascertaining the precise number of men and officers who were thus actually engaged in the war of Independence : but there were *many* of the best and noblest sons of this Congregation, who for the sake of their Country, had "pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honour." I find, however, from the "Church Register" that the number of those who were killed, and who died by oppression of the enemy, and in consequence of disease contracted while in service, amounts to *nine*.* How highly should we prize our liberties which were thus so dearly bought by toil and self-denial, by sufferings and death ! How closely should we consider the connection which exists between these liberties and our own beloved Church. And how solicitous should we be to transmit these liberties to the generations which are to succeed us as pure as we received them from those who preceded us, and bequeathed them to us. Never may the time come in the history of this Church, when the spirit of patriotism, which dwelt in the bosoms of our friends and forefathers, shall lose its vigour, or become extinct in the hearts of those who are their descendants and successors.

* Jonathan Smith, a ruling elder, died of camp fever, at Amboy, Oct. 13th, 1776.

John Campbell, by oppression of the enemy, Oct. 30th, 1776.

James McCoy, killed at Fort Washington, Nov. 16th, 1776.

Dugal Campbell, died of camp fever in New Jersey, January, 1777.

Patrick McClelland, by oppression of the enemy, 1777.

Joseph Watson, killed in battle, Dec. 1777.

Capt. Robert McCoy, killed at Crooked-billet, May 1st, 1778.

William Dean, " " " "

William Sterret, " " " "

In 1777, the following persons were added to the session; Messrs. Patrick Maxwell, Joseph Van Lear, Matthew Wilson, William Lowery, James McFarland and Henry Helm. In 1786, the town of Mercersburg was laid out. The population of which, and of the adjacent neighborhood increasing, it was deemed expedient to have a part of the preaching in town. For this purpose *this* edifice was erected in 1794; and for a number of years was without a ceiling, floor, pews, or pulpit. The ground on which it stands, and that which surrounds it, was given to the congregation by the Hon. Robert Smith, Esq. In 1772, Messrs. William Waddell, Archibald Irwin, James Crawford, and John Holiday were added to the session: In 1799, Messrs. John McMullin, John Johnston, Edward Welsh, William Reynolds, Robert McFarland, and John McCullough: And in 1800, Mr. John Scott, Robert McDowell, and James Dickey.

From the close of the war, after the state of public affairs had become more settled, until 1811, when Dr. King, in consequence of increasing bodily afflictions, resigned his pastoral charge, the state of the Congregation was peaceful and prosperous. At every Communion season, its numbers of professing disciples were increased by new accessions. During the whole of Dr. King's ministry in this Church, he *Baptized* nine hundred and fifty persons; and there was admitted to the *Communion*, four hundred and eighty. These numbers, however, are not strictly accurate, as the Doctor's infirmities during the latter part of his ministry were so great, that the "Register" was but imperfectly kept. There were persons both baptized and admitted to the Communion of the Church, whose names are not recorded. Dr. King was a man of piety and of extensive acquirements. His labours were owned of God, and eminently blessed in building up this Church. His memory still lives in the grateful remembrance and strong affections of not a few, who are spared with us to the present time; some of whom, bear the seal of baptism as administered by his own hand; and others, who are his spi-

ritual children, and who will be "his joy and crown of rejoicing in the presence of Jesus Christ at his coming." It may be interesting to such to hear a brief history of his life and character, as it was penned by his intimate friend and companion, the Rev. John McKnight, D. D., and delivered in a sermon occasioned by his death; while it will be instructive to those who have only heard of Dr. King by name.

"Dr. John King was born in Chesnut-level, in the lower part of Lancaster county, December 5th, A. D. 1740, of honest and reputable parents. He was the second son of Robert King, who emigrated from Ireland, and purchased a tract of land there, on which he resided, and on which Dr. King was born. The father was a ruling elder in the congregation of Chesnut-level, in which office he continued until his death, which was about the year 1763 or '64. At the age of fourteen or fifteen, Dr. King commenced his classical studies in a grammar school under Mr. Smith. Some time after he was removed to Newark Academy, where he completed his classical studies. Between the time of his leaving the Academy and going to College, he visited Conococheague, where, for several years, he taught an English and grammar school. He entered Philadelphia College, then under the care of "Doctors Smith and Allison," May 6th, 1765. Whilst prosecuting his studies in College, he, at the same time, taught one of the higher classes in the Academy, which was connected with it. He commenced "Bachelor of Arts," May 22d, 1766. After leaving College, being much afflicted with a pain in his breast and hoarseness, he was afraid that he would not be able to speak in public; which induced him to enter on the study of medicine, which he did in Baltimore. Getting better of his pain and hoarseness, he relinquished the study of medicine, in about three months after he had commenced it, and applied himself to the study of Divinity. It is not known under what minister he prosecuted his studies. He was licensed to preach August 5th, 1767. Having preached some time in this con-

gregation as a probationer, he was presented with a call to be its pastor, which he accepted, and was ordained and installed, August 30th, 1769. In May 1770, he took his degree of Master of Arts. April 2d, 1771, he married Miss Elizabeth McDowell, daughter of Mr. John McDowell, one of the ruling elders of the congregation in which he was settled. He was pastor of this Congregation upwards of forty years.

“ During the last six years of his life, he laboured under a rheumatic complaint, with which he was severely afflicted, and which baffled every medical application. For four years, however, of this time, he continued in the exercise of his ministry, in the latter part of which, his limbs were so enfeebled that he was not able to stand, and officiated in a chair fixed in the pulpit. Finding his complaint still increasing, and his prospects of usefulness, in a public capacity, at an end, he resigned his charge September 1811. His complaint continued to increase, and his bodily strength to decline, until he became utterly helpless. Some time before his death, he was seized with a violent fever, which brought his natural life to a close. He died July 15th, 1813, in the seventy-third year of his age.

“ Dr. King was a man of good natural parts, which he diligently cultivated. And in particular, from the time of his being settled in the ministry, being placed in favorable circumstances for study, he industriously improved what time he could redeem from the immediate duties of his office, in acquiring the knowledge of all those branches of literature and science which tended to respectability and usefulness. Besides being a good Latin and Greek scholar, he had a competent acquaintance with the Hebrew and the French. He had studied Natural and Moral Philosophy, Astronomy, the Mathematics and Logic with attention, and had a considerable general knowledge of Chemistry. He had paid considerable attention to Ecclesiastical History. With Divinity and its several branches, he was well acquainted.

Influenced by his well known and established character, as a scholar and a Divine, the Trustees of Dickinson College, at one of its first commencements in the College, viz. in the year 1792, conferred on him the degree of D. D.

“Dr. King was the author of several small publications, particularly a Catechism, for the instruction of youth, in the principles of the Christian religion—and more especially calculated to fortify them against the spirit of scepticism and infidelity, which at the time of its publication, threatened to corrupt the principles and morals of many;—of some pieces in the Assembly’s Magazine, on the subject of a man’s marrying his former wife’s sister;—of a Dissertation on the Prophecies, referring to the present times, &c. As a companion, Dr. King was sociable, cheerful, and instructing. As a friend, he was sincere, affectionate, uniform, and faithful. In his principles, Dr. King was strictly orthodox; a uniform and warm friend of the great doctrines of grace. His piety was rational and warm. His life fully corresponded with his profession, and he has left behind him a character unsullied by a blot. He evinced an increasing concern for the interests of Zion; and so far from being of a bigoted or contracted spirit, he held friendly intercourse with persons of different denominations, and was ready to countenance and encourage all who appeared desirous of promoting the cause of religion. He was ready to distribute, and willing to communicate to every real object of charity that presented itself, and to such literary institutions as promised to be useful. Though his afflictions were severe and of long continuance, and though he was considerably advanced in years, yet he retained, until very near the close of his life, his intellectual powers, very little impaired. His mind was still vigorous and active.

“Let us now,” continues Dr. McKnight, “proceed to take a view of the state of his mind under his affliction, and in prospect of his approaching dissolution. And here, says he, I shall introduce a communication on the subject, from

Mr. Elliott, your present worthy pastor. ‘I visited Dr. King,’ remarks Mr. Elliott, ‘some weeks before his death, and during his last illness. He entered into an animated conversation with respect to his views of religion, and the peculiar experiences of his mind. He spoke in exalted terms of the doctrines of grace, as the only foundation of a sinner’s hopes. He said he could see nothing in his past life which afforded him any ground of dependence, and that he had no hope from any other quarter, but from the glorious scheme of redemption, as revealed in the word of God. *No other way!* said he: *Nothing will do but this!*—He observed that he frequently felt a desire to be more fully acquainted with the glorious character of God, than what perhaps was justifiable. He believed Christians ought to be careful, not to transcend the limits assigned them in the word of God: adding, ‘that the word was our only standard and directory, with respect to the great mysteries of religion, and that to it, we ought to keep close.’ During the intervals of fever, when his mind was capable of regular exertion, he said, he was generally in prayer for himself and others. He was much afraid that he was too desirous to depart. He longed for the time when he should be delivered from his affliction. But he frequently observed, that he strove and prayed against an improper solicitude, wishing to wait the Lord’s time. About two weeks after the above conversation, and about ten days before his death, I was present at his bed-side, and upon his complaining that he suffered much; I observed, that I hoped he received abundant support from above. ‘*O yes,*’ said he, ‘*I am greatly supported.*’ He then observed that he had been strongly tempted, some time before, to doubt with respect to the foundation of his hopes; and whether that system of truth on which he had built his faith, was agreeable to the word of God. Convinced that he had, long ago, carefully examined into the ground of his belief, he sought comfort in prayer to God, and it was not long till he experienced it.

'I have now,' said he, with a tear of joy sparkling in his eye, *'I have now no doubt of my love to God: He is the most glorious of all objects: None other can be compared to him!'* Thus lived and thus died this servant of the Lord. Both in his life, and by his death, he has borne honourable testimony to the religion of Jesus, of which he was a professor, and of which he was a Minister. Having done much, and suffered much according to the will of God, he has *'fallen asleep,'* and *'has been gathered to his fathers.'* "

PERIOD III.

FROM THE SETTLEMENT OF THE REV. DAVID ELLIOTT, D. D.
AS PASTOR, A. D. 1812, TO THE CLOSE OF HIS MINISTRY
IN THIS CHURCH, A. D. 1829.

Dr. Elliott becomes Pastor. Church at St. Thomas. The Session. The Sabbath School. The Social prayer meeting. The Church edifice. The Church's prosperous state. A change, and the causes thereof. The Church at Loudon. A change in the times. Deaths. The Session. The Female Domestic Missionary Society. Revival of Religion. Dr. Elliott resigns. Results of labours.

AFTER an interval of about a year from the resignation of Dr. King, the Congregation invited the Rev. *David Elliott*, a Licentiate of the Carlisle Presbytery, to become their Pastor. He having accepted the invitation, was ordained and installed, October 7th, A. D. 1812. The number of Families belonging to the Congregation at the time of his settlement was one hundred and thirty-seven.

In 1813, the Presbyterian Church in "St. Thomas" was organized; most of the families and members of which were connected with this Church. This new organization was found to be expedient on account of the increase of the population of that district of country and their distance from our places of worship, which rendered it difficult for them to attend upon the public means of grace. By the organization of the Church at "St. Thomas," the limits of this Congregation became still more circumscribed: and yet in the end, it has resulted more in the furtherance of the Gospel, than if the parts separated had continued in connection with us. In 1814, the following persons were added to the Session; Messrs. Thomas McDowell, David Dunwoody, and John McCoy, (of John.)

In 1815 or '16, the "Sabbath School" was commenced. It was begun amidst great difficulties and discouragements. At this early period, it was a new thing in the Christian Church in this region. But by the perseverance of the few who had engaged in it, not only did they see it begin, but they were also permitted to see it subsequently in full and efficient operation. And from that time to the present, though attended with many fluctuations, its exercises have never been suspended for any length of time. How much good has been achieved by it, in its nearly thirty years existence, eternity alone will disclose. Impressions have doubtless been made upon the minds of those who have been, and those who are now scholars, which can never be effaced. And though for a time, the seed which has been sown may seem to be lost, yet under the life-giving influences of God's Spirit, it may still issue in a rich and glorious harvest.

The year 1818 is memorable in the history of this church for the establishment of "the Social prayer-meeting." The circumstances which led to its formation are thus related in a letter from your former pastor. "The want of some meeting of this kind, had been sensibly felt by me, from the time of my settlement; but the difficulty of getting suitable persons to lead, prevented an earlier attempt to organize one. After the removal of Mr. James McFarland to town, it was a frequent subject of conversation between him, Major Brownson and myself. Finally, one Sabbath afternoon, Mr. McFarland, Mr. George King, Major Brownson and myself were together at Mr. McFarland's. The prayer-meeting became the topic of conversation, and it was agreed that we would attempt its organization. This being agreed upon, I remarked to them, that it was the best time to begin immediately, and that we should date the commencement of the meeting from that afternoon. This was assented to, and after spending some time in social prayer, we adjourned to meet again on the next Sabbath afternoon, or perhaps that day two weeks. In the meantime we mentioned the subject,

as we had opportunity, to several of those who, we supposed, would favour the object. A few additional persons attended the next day; and in a few weeks the meetings were so large that we held them in Mr. Cowan's shop. In these meetings we had many delightful seasons." And thus from this small beginning, did one of the most important means of grace in this Church take its origin. And from that time onward has it been continued—sometimes flourishing, and at other times depressed—but at all times a source of richest consolation, and a means of quickening and of encouragement to those who attend it in a becoming spirit.

In 1819, the Congregation having so increased, it was found necessary to erect in the country a new house of worship. The old Church had been twice enlarged, but was still insufficient to accommodate the Congregation. The new Church edifice was completed in 1820: it cost near six thousand dollars. About this time the Congregation was in a condition the most flourishing and prosperous. It numbered upwards of one hundred and seventy Families: and had connected with it two Bible classes—the female consisting of one hundred and seven members; and the male of seventy. This prosperous state of things however did not long continue. A change took place, which, carrying its influence through a series of years, so greatly diminished the Congregation in numbers, that it has never fully recovered from it. The following causes may be mentioned as bringing about this change:

1. The Organization of a Church in Loudon. This took place in 1820, and was the means of taking off a number of families, which had been connected with this Congregation. After it was organized, it enjoyed for several years the ministerial labours of the Rev. Isaac Kellar; and subsequently those of the Rev. Robert Kennedy; but it has since become extinct.

2. Another cause was a Change in the *times*. Prior to this, every thing appeared to be in the most prosperous con-

dition. Providence had smiled upon the labours of the husbandman, and the earth had yielded her increase. Our commerce was whitening every sea; and our manufactories were accumulating vast wealth for their owners. The expansion of the credit system was never greater; and our citizens began to feel that they were in the full tide of prosperity. But a change ensued. The smiles of Providence were withdrawn. Judgment began to be mingled with mercies. And the *pressure* became universal throughout the whole extent of our country. It was felt here also. Not a few of our farmers, who had purchased their lands at enormous prices, and others who had made improvements at a great expense, were so affected by this "change of times," that to meet their liabilities, their "all" was swept from them. It is supposed that by this reverse of fortune, more than half a score of the best families and supporters of this congregation, were almost entirely ruined in their temporal circumstances. O that men would profit by the history of the past! How vain and fleeting are all earthly possessions! "Riches make to themselves wings." Why not then, from such considerations as these, give heed to our Saviour's counsel; "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." Matt. vi. 19, 20.

3. But there was still another cause, which was far more felt in this respect than either of the preceding. In the years 1821, '22, and '23, an epidemic sickness prevailed to so great an extent, that the whole neighborhood resembled a vast hospital. The number of those in health, were almost insufficient in many places, to take care of the sick. The effect of this visitation was, that in the first mentioned year, twenty-five persons died; and in the latter, forty-five—thus making an aggregate of *seventy-two* persons within two years. And of these seventy-two, many of them were mem-

bers of the Church in full communion ; many were heads of families ; and some of them among the most liberal contributors to the support of the gospel. So extensive and so rapid was the work of death, that in a period of nine years, commencing in 1820, not less than *one hundred and thirty* Communicating members became its victims—a number equal to that which, under ordinary circumstances, would not occur in eighteen years. On these scenes of sadness and sorrow I will not dwell. They are deeply impressed upon the minds and hearts of many who hear me this day. Many in this assembly, in the rending of relationship the closest and most endearing on earth, will never forget the poignancy of that grief, which during that distressing season, was poured forth more than once, around the bed of your dying, or at the grave of your departed friend. With these impressions still vivid and deeply fixed in the mind, may you have the consciousness and the evidence, that they have been sanctified to you. “For the Lord will not cast off for ever : but though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.” Sam. iii. 31–33.

In 1822, the following persons were added to the session : Messrs. John Brownson, John McCoy (of Robert), and William Crawford. In 1825, “the Female Domestic Missionary Society” was formed. At first, it was auxiliary to the “Foreign Missionary Society,” but subsequently changed its relation, and became auxiliary to our “Domestic Board.” At its first formation it numbered eighty-three members : at the present time, it numbers seventy-three. The total amount of funds contributed since its organization is, eight hundred and sixty-five dollars. It is worthy of remark, that probably there is not another society of the kind within the bounds of our “Synod,” which has been in existence for so long a time, or which has operated more efficiently. What may be the fruits of these offerings of love, will not

be known in Time: Although even here, the hearts of its members may be gladdened, as by the reports of our Missionaries, they hear of Churches formed, where before they did not exist; of feeble ones, strengthened and supplied with the ministry of reconciliation; of saints, built up in holiness and comforted; and of sinners converted to God. Long may it continue to prosper; may the list of its members increase; may its contributions be augmented a hundred fold; and may the blessing of the Most High, descend upon the giver and the gift. In 1826, Messrs. Alexander McCoy, and James Culbertson were added to the session.

The year 1828 is memorable in the history of this Church for a "Revival of religion." The history of this interesting work of grace, I give in the words of Dr. Elliott. "It was in the fall of 1828, that God visited this Church with a season of reviving grace. The work was chiefly confined to that branch of the Church which was in town. It commenced rather suddenly, and to me unexpectedly. I had been mourning over the low state of religion—particularly the worldly spirit which prevailed. On the Sabbath preceding the meeting of the Presbytery at Newville, I preached on the "Parable of the Talents." I felt unusual liberty, and a deep and solemn concern for the salvation of sinners. The people appeared very solemn and tender. At the prayer meeting in the afternoon there was great solemnity and some weeping. Having seen these things several times before, I attached no great importance to them. The next day I left for Presbytery;—reported to the Presbytery a low and formal state of religion; remained abroad the next Sabbath, assisting with a Communion service; and returned home early the week following. No sooner had I reached home, than I was greeted with the intelligence, that their prayer meetings in town, seemed to be visited with the special tokens of God's presence; and that the solemnity and tenderness which appeared on the Sabbath before I left, had increased, and that many evinced great anxiety about their

souls. I immediately proceeded to town, and found all to be as stated. Religion was the engrossing subject of conversation, and the people of God prayed in a manner very different from that in which they had done before. Things progressed in this way for some time. The work did not extend, as I expected it would, through other parts of the Congregation; although there was some increase of attention on the part of the people generally." As the fruits of this work of grace, it may be stated, that twenty-four persons were added to the Church on profession of their faith.

Dr. Elliott having received an invitation to become Pastor of the Church in Washington, Pennsylvania, and having accepted it, resigned the pastoral charge of this Church, October 29th, 1829. During his ministry, he Baptized six hundred and fifty-five persons: and there was admitted to the Communion of the Church three hundred and forty:—on Profession, two hundred and sixty-one; and by Certificate, seventy-nine. Of Dr. Elliott, as a man and as a minister of our Lord, he needs no panegyric from me. His name is in all the Churches. It has become identified with our Church at large. It forms part of its history. And so long as soundness in the faith is appreciated, and the Presbyterian form of Church Government, and its Discipline are respected, the name of "Elliott" will shine forth with resplendent lustre. During the seventeen years that he was your Pastor, he made full proof of his ministry. And not a few in this assembly are the seals of that ministry, and will *arise* to call him "blessed." Long may he live to honour his Divine Master, in the work in which he is engaged.

PERIOD IV.

FROM THE CLOSE OF DR. ELLIOTT'S MINISTRY IN THIS CHURCH,
A. D. 1829, TO THE PRESENT TIME, A. D. 1845.

The Rev. Thomas Creigh becomes Pastor. Revival of Religion, and remarks thereon. The Female Sewing Society. Revival of Religion. The Session. Religious Controversy. Review of this period. Present state of this Church. Concluding remarks.

ON the 17th of November, A. D. 1831, two years after the close of Dr. Elliott's ministry, He, who now addresses you—a Licentiate of the Carlisle Presbytery—was ordained and installed Pastor. From the time of my settlement among you, to the present time, you are as familiar with the history of this Church, as is the speaker. I will therefore mention some of the most prominent occurrences only, without entering into detail.

In the beginning of 1832, this Church was again visited with a "Revival of religion;" which commenced with great power during a Protracted meeting held in the month of February; although there had been indications before this, of a change for the better. As the fruits of this gracious outpouring of the spirit, one hundred and seven persons were added to the church that year. Of these, forty-five were males; sixty-two were females; and thirty-five were heads of families. In regard to the character of this work, I would beg leave to remark, that while there were some measures used of a very questionable tendency—although in accordance with the spirit of the times—yet, if there have ever been genuine revivals of religion, this deserves to be classified with them. Unworthy members will find admit-

tance to the Communion of the church, even when the greatest vigilance has been used to guard its portals. Among our Saviour's own immediate followers—his chosen twelve—there was a Judas. And He has given us intimation in the “parable of the wheat and the tares,” that the ‘visible church’ will be a mixed society, until “in the day of judgment,” He will separate the righteous from the wicked. Why then should we look for a different state of things, from that which now exists? Ardently as we pray for, and earnestly as we desire it, we cannot expect it fully, while the Church is in an imperfect state. I would then briefly add, that after a period of nearly thirteen years, since these one hundred and seven persons were received into the Church, the following is the result. Twelve, have died; thirty-five, have received letters of dismission to other Churches; six, have removed without taking certificates, and of whose residence we are ignorant, but who for aught we know may be, at the present time, consistent members of other Churches; three, have been the subjects of Church discipline; and one, has been ordained to the ministry of the gospel; while all the rest are still in connection with us, and are in good and regular standing. I simply ask, even when persons are received into the Communion of the Church in the ordinary way—when there is no special interest on the subject of religion—whether any Church register presents a more favourable result? To God alone, be all the praise!

In this same year, 1832, “The Female Sewing Society” was organized, the object of which was to educate poor and pious young men for the Gospel ministry. After a short time however, it changed its relation and became auxiliary to the “Foreign Missionary Society,” and is now applying its funds to educate a Heathen youth in the Orphan Asylum at Futtehghurh in North India, under the care of the Rev. Henry R. Wilson; and who bears the name of your former much loved pastor, “David Elliott.” The amount of funds

contributed since the formation of this society is six hundred dollars. In 1833, the following persons were added to the session: Messrs. John Witherspoon, John McCullough and John Dorrance.

In the winter of 1842 and '43, this Church was again visited with a "Revival of religion." During the nine months immediately following its commencement, thirty-four persons were received into the Communion of the Church, on profession of their faith. Of those who were then received I will not now speak. We would rather that a still longer period should intervene, in order to test the genuineness of their conversion. Yet, judging of the future by the past, we think that we shall have no cause to regret their introduction among the professed disciples of our Lord. Not a case has occurred requiring the exercise of the discipline of the Church. The manner in which this Revival was conducted; the truths which were presented, and the manner in which they were exhibited; the instructions which were given to the inquiring; and the care which was exercised in receiving applicants into the membership of the Church, afford us every reasonable ground from which to expect the most favourable results.

During the greater part of this period which has been claiming our attention, our Church at large was agitated by a difference of opinion, chiefly in reference to doctrines and polity, and which resulted in a division in 1838, known by the names of *Old-school* and *New-school*. In all this controversy, which was deep and wide—spread throughout the whole length and breadth of the land; while *here* too, intense interest was felt in relation to it, yet as a Church, we have stood fast in the faith of our fathers. Nor at the present time, is there a Church—composed of as many members—more harmonious, or more united, or more cordial in their adherence to the symbols of our faith, as taught in the Westminster Confession of faith, Catechisms, and Form of Go-

vernment. We record the fact as a matter of sincere and heartfelt thankfulness.

Within this period there have been Baptized, three hundred and sixty persons—Infants, two hundred and eighty-seven—Adults, seventy-three. The number of persons received into the Communion of the Church, four hundred and one—on Profession, three hundred and five—by Certificate, ninety-six. And there have been contributed to different objects of benevolence, three thousand three hundred and fifteen dollars. When I commenced my ministry among you in 1831, the number of Families belonging to the Congregation was about one hundred and forty: and at the present time—after a period of thirteen years—it amounts to one hundred and fifty-five. Of these, twenty are Colored. And the number of Communicating members is, four hundred and four—of whom, forty are Colored persons.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

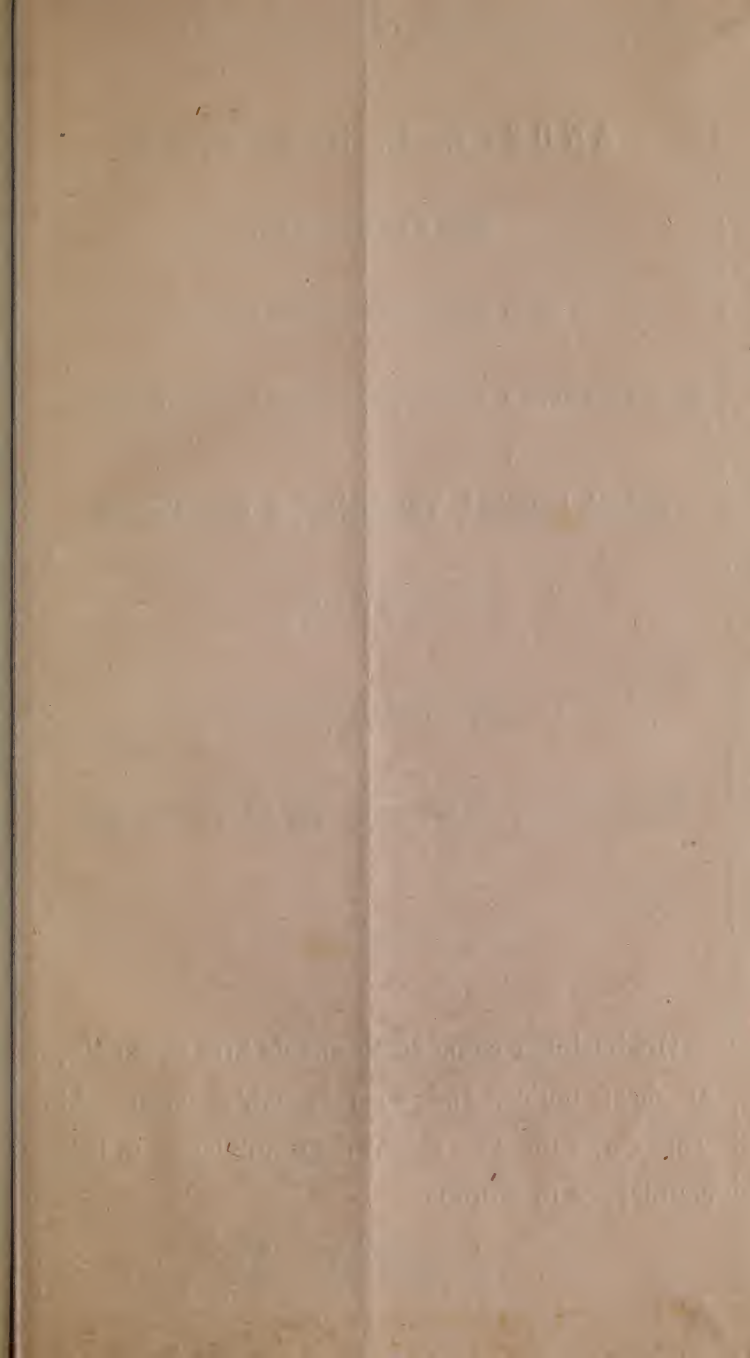
In view then of all that has been said in your hearing this day, in relation to this our beloved Church, may we not erect our “Ebenezer”—for “hitherto hath the Lord helped us.” And from all which let us learn:—

1. That to God's care and kindness, we are indebted for the permanency of this Church thus far, and for its prosperity. It has had its trials and its changes, but “the gates of hell have not prevailed against it.” At one time in its early history, it was entirely scattered; at another time, it was nearly broken up; and a third time, it was greatly diminished by death, in connection with pecuniary embarrassments; and yet, in the midst of all these adverse circumstances, the Lord has kept it. And this day, after a period of *one hundred and six years*, notwithstanding all the disasters which have befallen it, the number of its Families and Communicants have not only *not* diminished, but has been greatly augmented.

It is an interesting fact connected with the history of this Church, and which ought not to be passed over unnoticed on the present occasion, that for the space of seventy-five years, as far back as our records reach, our Church has maintained its ground, as will be seen from the following statements :— In the year 1769, when Dr. King became its Pastor, the number of families then connected with it, was, *one hundred and thirty*. In 1789, twenty years afterwards, he makes the following remark :—“ *The number of families connected with this congregation, is about the same as when I settled.*” In 1812, the number was, *one hundred and thirty-seven*. In 1820, upwards of *one hundred and seventy*. In 1831, about *one hundred and forty*—having been greatly diminished by the causes already mentioned. And at the present time, (1845,) they number *one hundred and fifty-five*. Thus has it never sunk below the first named number, but has always exceeded it. And rarely has there been a Communion season at which, according to the register, there has not been an addition to its membership. And thrice has it been visited with the special tokens of Divine grace. With devout gratitude we record these facts ; and in recording them, we give all the glory to Him, who has brought them into being. Ministers and members of the Church may labour and pray for the building up of Zion, but unless God hears their prayers and blesses their efforts, Zion cannot prosper. “ Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” Or, in the expressive language of that most laborious of all Christ’s Apostles, “ I have planted, Apollos watered ; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.”—1 Cor. iii. 6, 7. Hence ;

2. If God has thus prospered this Church for so long a time, let us never yield to despondency in regard to its future condition. If, in looking back upon its past history, we can discover that the Lord has led it, and kept it, and pros-

pered it ; we are warranted in drawing the conclusion—that if we remain faithful to Him—He will continue to dwell among us : *If we remain faithful to Him*—these are the terms. “The Lord is with you while you be with Him : and if ye seek Him, He will be found of you : but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you.”—2 Chron. xv. 2. On this principle He has always acted towards the Church. Its entire history, from its commencement to the present time, warrants the remark. And what is thus true of the Church in general, is equally true in its application to particular Churches. It is true in relation to *this* Church. If this Church has been preserved and prospered, it is because it has been faithful to its Head. If it would continue to prosper, it must continue in its fidelity to its King. Its *Minister*—whosoever he may be—and its *Officers*, and its *Members*, must possess the Spirit of their Lord and Master ; must follow closely in His footsteps ; must yield implicit obedience to his commands ; must maintain and disseminate the truth ; must be united to one another in sentiment and in affection ; and must labour and pray for its welfare. Thus living and thus acting, God will still bestow upon it the choicest riches of His grace ; its prosperity shall continue to increase, and its permanency shall be rendered sure. And to secure these ends, let us all, dearly beloved Christian friends, this day, in humble dependence upon the grace of our Divine Redeemer, adopt the language of the captive Israelite, and ever live under its constraining influence,—“If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth ; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.”—Psalm cxxxvii. 5, 6.



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